

01/16/2015

Good Morning to the Chairman Essman and Honorable members of the House State Administration Committee.

I am Joanne Blyton, former House Representative for HD59 Carbon County. I reside at 6 Grays Lane Joliet, MT 59041; I may be reached at 406-962-3767.

I regret I cannot be in Helena to testify before you on HB 84 a comprehensive election reform bill. My comments are brief. (My husband has to be in the hospital)

The birth of this bill comes from the request of a current house representative. His ingenious study bill request was to make things happen – to change the way we handle elections. As we all know the process to make things happen sometimes takes a long road. And, this road is considerably shorter with HB84. A baby has to crawl before it walks; HB84 is needed for uniformity in handling elections.

The Interim State Admin Committee formed a sub-committee, Chaired by Rep. Bryce Bennett, which I had the pleasure of spending many working hours on. Stakeholders (election administrators, clerks and recorders, school trustees and representatives, lobbyist, government department folks) all spent countless hours working toward an end product to bring to the 2015 Legislature. Many came from all across this great state to participate in the process. Many saw this as a positive positioning of the election process; even though there were areas of conflict, the final goal was to create a tool by which reform of the election process could happen. All stakeholders agreed to see if we could make it work. And even when we disagreed it seemed as if common ground appeared.

Many long bipartisan hours have been spent to get where we are today. The State Admin Interim Committee supported this bill unanimously.

If we want the same ole, same ole, we will do nothing; if we want to be moving in an innovative forward direction then I implore you to support HB84, comprehensive election reform.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my brief thoughts on this important bill. I urge you to pass this bill for the people of Montana.

Respectfully submitted

Joanne Blyton

EXHIBIT
DATE
BY